

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE COUNCIL

CAC Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2019

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Seatuck Environmental Center

550 South Bay Ave, Islip, NY 11751

Present:

Maureen Dolan Murphy, Chair CAC/Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Judi Bird, League of Women Voters Brookhaven
Rachel Neville, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Kaetlyn Jackson, National Park Service, Fire Island National Seashore
Rob Longuara, Town of Hempstead
Kyle Rabin, LI Regional Planning Council/LINAP and Friends of the South Shore Blueway
Emilio Sosa, Long Island Paddlers
Edwin Mangual, Long Island Paddlers
Lou Siegel, NYS Marine Education Association
Maryann Webb, Town of Oyster Bay
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Association
Joe Guarino, Town of Babylon
Sally Kellogg, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Ben Sohm, South Shore Bay House Owners
Marshall Brown, Save the Great South Bay
Rob DiGiovanni, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
George Costa, Trout Unlimited/Art Flick Chapter
Jeremy Campbell, NYS DOS/Reserve Coordinator

1. Introductions

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and introductions were made.

2. Blueway

M. Murphy recapped the Suffolk County Blueway trail from the last meeting and affirmed the county is still in the inventory process.

M. Murphy introduced J. Guarino who spoke about the Town of Babylon's Blueway trail which began in 2014 because the Town Council wanted to increase access for paddlers. The first step was to identify existing resources, some of which DEC had already listed and the others the town staff already had a good handle on. Town staff reached out to the three villages located within the town for public launch sites. Staff didn't want beginners to be intimidated so they created three different experience levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced, for the blueway trail with a couple different trail lengths. Each location has a sign that indicates where

the other launch sites are, brochures regarding the trails can be found at Town facilities. The materials stressed safety. The Town wanted beginners to enjoy kayaking with the goal of getting more long-term paddlers and for paddlers to feel completely immersed in nature even though this is in a suburban area. The kickoff event was at Cedar Beach in September. Several groups were involved to ensure a safe event including the Bay Constables, the local Fire Departments, and County Police.

Question: E.Sosa: Is the trail open to only Town residents?

Answer: J. Guarino: The trail is open to everyone who has kayaks/canoes/paddleboards.

Question: E. Mangual: How many people attended the event?

Answer: J. Guarino: 35-50 people at the first event, the last event was close to 60 people. The event location restricted the attendees to 60 due to the launch site size and ability to park.

Question: R. DoGiovanni: Has there been an increase in paddlers since the release of the trail?

Answer: J. Guarino: There has been an increase in inquiries about paddling in the Town of Babylon and the Bay Constables have noted seeing more paddlers than before. Residents seem to have more knowledge about these recreational opportunities than they did before. This is a good way to connect people with their waterways, it is more affordable to rent a kayak than some other alternatives.

Question: M. Brown: Do you get people into wildlife viewing areas? If so, what are people seeing?

Answer: Babylon does not have organized tours and there is minimal signage along the trail to keep the marshes more pristine.

Question: R. DoGiovanni: is there a link to identify/report wildlife?

Answer: J. Guarino: Not on the brochure.

Question: E. Mangual: There were only two events?

Answer: J. Guarino: There were a lot of logistics for the parks staff involved in planning the events. There were a lot of campers at the site which made it harder to get people to the event. Babylon could choose a site on mainland but that would facilitate different start and end points which require a lot of logistical planning.

M. Dolan Murphy said that Citizens Campaign for the Environment partnered with REI to have a kayaking experience at Town of Oyster Bay's event on September 14th at Tobay Beach. The waterproof Blueway trail maps for Babylon and Nassau County will be available.

K. Rabin, Chair of Friends of the South Shore Blueway and R. Longuara from Town of Hempstead discussed the South Shore Blueway trail. The vision of the trail is to offer safe recreational opportunities to explore the water, provide public access, promote environmental awareness, create environmental stewards, highlight community connections, with a goal of

connecting to the NYC water trail and eventually to Suffolk County. This trail is a safe, legal network for human powered boating that is open to all skill levels. The South Shore Blueway Trail launched in June 2016 and had 200 people in attendance with 70 crafts in the water. The trail is 18 miles long with 20 launches and stopover points at point lookout and the Marine Nature Study area. The origins of this can be found in the Bayway plan from the 1990s-2000s. The Town of Hempstead had started their own blueway trail but then joined the countywide South Shore Blueway plan which uses existing infrastructure for people to passively explore the waterways. One of the issues to think about was signage, too many signs interfere with the natural beauty of the marshes and they may not always be visible depending on the tides. The plan was prepared by *Going Coastal Inc.* and *Cameron Engineer and Associates*. Friends of the South Shore Blueway is a 501-c3 which is dedicated to responsible use, enjoyment and appreciation of the blueway. The municipality helped with leadership to get the project off the ground, Friends of the South Shore Blueway helps recruit volunteers for stewardship. The Blueway team collaborates with stakeholders to improve existing launch sites, install interpretive signage and increase the number of launch sites. A mobile friendly site and map are slated to be developed. The second blueway festival was held in 2018 to celebrate the bay and involve the community. The event was held at Hewlett Beach where multiple environmental groups and recreation groups were present. These events were a lot of work and perhaps will be every other year. Over 100 people attended each event which was free to attend.

Comment: B. Sohms: Town dock in Seaford is underutilized and a ramp could be created on the dock.

Response: R. Longuara: Seamans neck park is in the line up for a launch and permitting is already being applied for.

Comment: M. Webb: Do you have any inflatable kayaks?

Response: R. Longuara: Town of Hempstead does not have any.

3. South Shore Estuary Reserve Stewardship Award

M. Dolan Murphy thanked the CAC members for promoting the award. The application deadline needed to be extended but good applications came in, there were 12 received and two that rose to the top. Descriptions of the winners and their projects was read.

Motion by M. Dunn for CAC to recommend the two selections for the 2019 SSER Council Stewardship Award; seconded by J. Bird; carried.

The celebration will be Wednesday, October 16th from 1-4 and will depart from the Bay Shore Marina. DOS is working on the awards; CAC members will help procure food and drink.

4. Jeremy Campbell, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

J. Campbell announced that Christie Pfoertner is leaving SSER and moving to the Oceans and Great Lakes program within DOS and that SSER will be looking to fill positions which will be

pushed to the CAC when the descriptions come out. J. Campbell reminded CAC members that the 2nd Annual Estuary Day will be on September 14th in Oyster Bay. SSER was also present at Dockside Festival, Seafood Festival, Sayville Summerfest, participated in the Marine Mini-camps where 175 students were reached. Lastly, an update was given that SSER will be participating in A Day in the Life with bay sites to connect the tributaries to the inlets and through the bay.

An update on the TAC was given, they are discussing a Climate Vulnerability Assessment. M. Dunn explained they are focusing on CMP goals; a subcommittee wrote a letter and have information to provide to the TAC.

5. Public Comment and Announcements

Kyle Rabin – LINAP focused a newsletter on SSER. LINAP partnered with Peconic Estuary Program to promote estuary day. K Rabin announced the Suffolk County sub watershed plan was released with meetings on 9/5 and 9/6, each meeting had 50-60 people in attendance. The comment period ends on 9/16. The SSER Council submitted a letter of support.

Kaetlyn Jackson – Protecting the Environment in Patchogue is trawling for microplastics. PEP is surveying next to Blue point with two transects in the bay and four upriver. St. Joseph's students are performing the lab work. Seatuck's intern examined three sites, two bay sites and one ocean site, and has a preliminary analysis done but still more work to do. Brookhaven is interested in using this methodology on the north shore. There is a clean-up for the Patchogue River on 9/21 beginning at 10AM meeting at the Ferry Terminal.

Jeremy Campbell – SAV survey finished fieldwork in July and it is anticipated that the findings will be created by end of the year. Upon completion, J. Campbell will bring the updated map to the CAC.

Rob DiGiovanni – Jonesy the whale was installed at Jones Beach. Atlantic Marine Conservation Society partnered with Citizens Campaign for the Environment to increase awareness of marine debris issues and created a 33-foot humpback whale sculpture which can be filled with marine debris.

Lou Siegel – The Littoral Society has a cleanup list located online.

Maureen Dunn – National Cleanup day is 9/21. The unified water study is a citizen science opportunity for the north shore of Long Island but there is not a similar program for the south shore. Save the Sound lends out equipment for citizens science programs and SSER could have a similar program. The diadromous fish meeting is 9/27, the oyster ball at blue point where oyster shell recycling will occur is 10/5 and an invasives pull of Penataquit creek at First Baptist Church is 10/5. Peconic Estuary Program's TAC focused on water quality at the last meeting where they asked the community, *what is clean water*. Representatives from Tampa Bay presented information on how they used their community goals as metrics to report successes.

Marshall Brown – Save the Great South Bay has a beach party on 9/21 which follows the Mayor's charity cup regatta, environmental groups will be present at this event which runs from 3-7 at the Long Island Yacht club. SGSB speaker series on aquaculture will be on 10/18 at The View.

George Costa – DEC Long Island women's fishing festival will be on 9/28 at Belmont Lake State Park. Pine Barrens Discovery Day is 9/14 and A Day in the Life has 11 sites this year.

*** Minutes, July 9, 2018**

Motion by J. Bird, to approve the July 9, 2019 CAC meeting minutes; seconded by M. Brown, carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.